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## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS



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**Port Charlotte, Fla.** — The Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the 2017 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This study highlights the many community factors that influence health and uses established data, much of which is available from the department at [www.FLHealthCHARTS.com](http://www.FLHealthCHARTS.com). Starting on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 the County Health Rankings report can be found at: [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

“The *County Health Rankings* help us to understand what factors have influenced good health in our community and how we can continue to make Charlotte County a healthy place to live, learn, work and play,” stated Dr. Frank Lepore, Administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County. “The *Rankings* provide us with an opportunity to make people aware of our collective efforts to improve the health of our residents, like the newly re-opened dental clinic at the Department of Health that accepts Medicaid patients as well as those who have private insurance, and our partnership with Charlotte County Public Schools to offer dental sealants to students.”

The *Rankings* include two categories: Health Outcomes and Health Factors. “Health Outcomes” use length of life and quality of life as standard measurements to describe a community’s health. “Health Factors” are indicators that help determine our future health (i.e., factors that can ultimately make us sick or lead to an early death). For 2017, Charlotte County ranked 22 (out of 67) for Health Outcomes, and 11 (out of 67) for Health Factors.

These rankings are a snapshot of the health of counties across the country and they emphasize that health is not a singular effort but a combined work in progress across all community partners. The department works in collaboration with local governments, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, business groups, schools, faith-based organizations, and many other stakeholders to improve the health of all people in Charlotte County. These rankings use data related to physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors and clinical care.

In Charlotte County, the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), created by Healthy Charlotte County, is designed to address specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. The department has partnered with many stakeholders to implement the Plan and collaborates regularly to track progress.

Healthy Charlotte County uses the Community Health Improvement Plan as a guide to a variety of initiatives aimed at improving the health of Charlotte County residents. Five subcommittees meet regularly to focus on improving access to healthcare, chronic disease prevention, maternal and child health, mental health, and positive aging.

“Members of Healthy Charlotte County promote 5-2-1-0 Let’s Go! as a guide for improving health factors. The County recently took part in a 5-2-1-0 Challenge. County employees learned the importance of eating 5 fruits and vegetables daily, limiting their screen-time to 2 hours or less, enjoying at least 1 hour of physical activity each day, and drinking 0 sugary beverages so they can focus on drinking more water,” stated Stephanie Phillips, Wellness Coordinator for Charlotte County. “This Challenge was a spin-off of the educational program that is offered to our local second grade students through Healthy Charlotte County to help reduce rates of obesity in the county. We want children and adults to know the value of living the 5-2-1-0 lifestyle.”

According to the *Rankings*, the percentage of adults age 20 and over that reported having no leisure-time physical activity in Charlotte County improved from 24% in 2016 to 22% in 2017. “Numbers like these are very encouraging,” stated Dr. Lepore. “The more we can get our community engaged in turning off their TV screens and computer screens and getting active, the better our overall health will be. That is why Healthy Charlotte County and the Department of Health are promoting Screen-Free Week the first week of May, as a challenge to our residents to go screen-free for an entire week and get active. It’s small changes like this that will make a positive impact in the health of Charlotte County.”

Last week the Florida Department of Health celebrated a one year milestone as the first integrated department of health in the nation to achieve national accreditation through the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#). Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. The seal of accreditation signifies that the Florida Department of Health has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health.

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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